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SUBJECT: FORMER TOYOTA CHAIRMAN TO PLAY LARGER ROLE ON
CLIMATE CHANGE

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, reasons 1.4 b/d

11. (C) The Prime Minister's Council on Global Warming Issues, headed by former Toyota Chairman Hiroshi Okuda, will play a crucial role in determining which climate change measures the GOJ adopts, MOFA Global Issues Director General Koji Tsuruoka told EMIN April 14. The Council set up a subcommittee to evaluate measures such as emissions trading and carbon taxes at its April 12 meeting. Okuda's council will have to consider the Prime Minister's ability to be seen as a leader on global warming, opposition from industry, and public expectations, Tsuruoka confirmed. Internally, he said the council must maintain a "very delicate balance" with powerful members who have long and effectively blocked cap-and-trade in Japan, such as the chairman of Nippon Steel and the president of Tokyo Electric Power Co. Tsuruoka added, however, in Japan when such a high level group "studies" something, the expectation is that the decision has, in effect, been made. Tsuruoka said, while there are a number of details or alternative plans to consider, he would be surprised if no announcement on cap-and-trade were made before the G8 summit.

12. (C) MOFA International Bureau Global Environment Division Deputy Director Nobuyuki Kikuchi told Econoff separately Okuda will have an international envoy role in addition to his work with industry on climate issues. As an envoy, Okuda is planning trips to work with industry and government officials overseas, including trips to China and India, he added. Dates for those trips have not been decided, but Okuda's role would be similar to Mutsuyoshi Nishimura, who has been Japan's lead at the MEM. When asked, neither Kikuchi nor a working-level official in MOFA's G8 Summit Office could describe how Nishimura and Okuda's roles could be differentiated or kept from overlapping and confusing lines of communication with partner governments.
SCHIEFFER